

**Murdo, Patricia**

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**From:** dns mtnet [dns@mt.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 23, 2006 4:41 PM  
**To:** Murdo, Patricia  
**Subject:** Why should a Board of Nursing exist?

Last Thursday the question was asked, "Why should a Board of Nursing exist?" My opinion is below.

Registered Nurses are educated not only to practice and manage the highest level of nursing care but also to be leaders in defining safe and comprehensive nursing practice standards. Nursing practice involves accepting the orders of other disciplines in order to administer medical treatments and diagnostic testing under the patient's plan of care. Often it is the most fragile human beings that receive the most invasive medications and treatments. Non-compliance with nursing standards would prove harmful if not fatal to many health care recipients. Evidence based research has shown that advances in technology has changed nursing practice to the extent that formal nursing programs, continuing education and routine competency evaluation are vital to the safe practice of nursing and subsequently to public protection.

The first Nursing Boards were created to provide an avenue for bringing public safety issues that affect licensed nurses before a group of nursing peers for evaluation. Did the nursing program adequately prepare the entry level nurse? Did the nursing care in question fall short of the current standard for safe care? Was care omitted that should have been delivered? Was the delivered care clearly within the currently defined scope of the licensee? Was it within a "gray, undefined area" where clarification is needed? Should the defined scope be safely expanded? Does it need to be further defined? Should the licensee face discipline and if so what should that discipline be? Should it be a single disciplinary event? Is continued monitoring of the licensee required? What is the impact to public safety on a licensee with job mobility across state lines?

There is no checklist that one person can follow in all situations because the answers to these questions are not based on a single factor. The answers are subject to the environment in which they occur and the best answers are brought to light with critical thinking and group reflection. A group of peers- licensed, experienced nurses, have the ability to understand the technical aspects of nursing practice and are educated in research models that examine aspects of nursing practice in a variety of environments.

That peer group is capable of identifying a standard and evaluating nursing practice against that standard in order to render a formal opinion that is reflected within rule. I believe that peer group should define itself as a board, independent of political ties and armed with the regulatory knowledge and tools required of board members to effectively protect the public. In the Gallup 2005 poll, nurses were recognized by the public as individuals with the highest level of integrity and trustworthiness. I believe that nurses should be given the authority of regulating their own profession so that the public's trust is not eroded by political issues and business models that promote economy of scale.

In my opinion, approving quality nursing programs, Identifying changing practice trends, regulating nursing practice and disciplining deviations from standardized nursing practice in an equitable manner are best preformed by a peer group of nursing professionals and healthcare consumers under the framework of a board.

Sandra M Dickenson, MS, RN